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February 5, 2001

Docket No. 00N-1396 & Docket No. 00D-1598
FDA Commissioner, Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)
Food and Drug Administration
5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061
Rockville, MD 20852

Dear FDA Commissioner:

I do not wish to consume genetically engineered foods. As a consumer of a democratic society, it is my right to know if the food I am purchasing has been genetically modified, just as it is my right to know of any other added ingredients.

Genetic engineering involves manipulations of genes, and splicing from different species. This sometimes means even splicing plant genes with animals genes. I am a vegetarian and wish to consumer purely vegetarian foods - no animals in my vegetables please!

Foods containing or produced from genetic engineering can cause allergic responses, be toxic, have lowered nutritional value and/or compromise immune responses in consumers. Likewise, genetically engineered crops can have unpredictable, irreversible changes to the environment, as we've seen with the corn and Monarch Butterflies - and also with the Starlink corn, and how hard it was to contain and keep other crops pure from it.

The FDA's proposal for companies to merely voluntary consult with FDA concerning the safety of their foods is totally inadequate. Your job is to protect me and my interests - not some big conglomerate and theirs. The FDA MUST require MANDATORY pre-market safety testing. FDA's proposed rule that environmental review procedures be exempt under the National Environmental Policy Act does not protect the environment. FDA must require MANDATORY pre-market environmental review.

FDA's proposed rule makes all labeling of genetically engineered foods (GEFs) only voluntary. This is a complete crock. It does not protect my right-to-know or allow me the choice to protect my family and the environment. Voluntary labeling unfairly reverses the financial burden onto producers who do not use GEFs. It unfairly reverses the burden to consumers - who have to guess or research to find out which foods contain GEFs. Mandatory labeling is essential for the traceability of GEF products throughout the food supply for health

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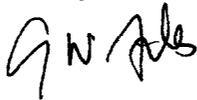
professionals. Mandatory labeling also protects overseas markets for farmers. The FDA MUST require MANDATORY labeling of GEFs.

The FDA notes that producers of GEFs may claim that any such information, including the premarket notification, is trade secret or confidential business information subject to exemption from public disclosure requirements. The FDA must require full disclosure. Disclosing that a food contains GEFs does not mean disclosing trade secrets.

I will settle for nothing less than mandatory safety testing, LABELING, pre-market environmental review, and full disclosure. All GEFs should be taken off supermarket shelves until these are established. We, the people of the United States of America are not guinea pigs.

Please take action on this so that I will feel safe buying local products labeled other than organic. I do like to support local farms and businesses, but will not buy their products until their labels disclose all ingredients.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amy W. Files', written in a cursive style.

Amy W. Files